

Who should control Ireland in the sixteenth century Tudor monarchs or Irish lords?

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Student booklet: Who should control Ireland?

Worksheets & sources (A3 sheets landscape)

1. *What happened at Mullaghmast in 1577?*
(with note on visual sources for Tudor Ireland)
- 2 & 3. *Why did the massacre of Mullaghmast take place?*
4. *Was their Irish policy worthwhile for the Tudors?*

Suggested textbook

Change and Conflict. Britain, Ireland & Europe from the late 16th to the early 18th centuries
Patricia Rice, CUP, 0-52146-603-2, esp. pp 26-38

For more resources on Ireland in the sixteenth century, go to
<http://journals.aol.co.uk/iis04/GraceOMalley>



Above: Irish lord prepares for battle
Below: Submitting to the English



About this study unit

<p>This four-lesson study unit is intended as a depth study within the Key Stage 3 History curriculum, perhaps in Year 8.</p> <p>The key question asks ‘Who should control Ireland in the sixteenth century: Tudor monarchs or Irish lords?’ and uses one controversial event, the massacre of Mullaghmast in 1577, to examine the Tudors’ eventually successful attempt to extend their control over the whole of Ireland and overcome Irish resistance by a combination of ‘discreet handling’ and ‘force and shedding of blood’.</p> <p>At first the Tudors, as Lords of Ireland, controlled only the Pale, a small area in and around Dublin. After 1541, they were Kings and Queens of Ireland and by the death of Elizabeth I, at the end of a long, costly and increasingly bloody struggle, their writ ran throughout the country.</p> <p>Students analyse a range of sources on the massacre and Anglo-Irish relations in order to consider the significance of the massacre in this process and to devise an enquiry, asking (a) how and with what success did the Tudors seek to overcome Irish resistance and establish their rule throughout Ireland and (b) what was the price of their success in establishing control over Ireland.</p> <p>Historical links The unit relates to the Normans in Ireland and provides a means of drawing links across different periods in the past.</p> <p>Dealing, as it does, with the process of the colonization of Ireland, the unit provides links with the growth of empire. Discussions could involve looking for similarities between and differences from other events associated with conquest and imperialism - the fate of the American Indians at Wounded Knee (1890), the siege of Benin in West Africa (1897) or the Amritsar Massacre in India (1919).</p> <p>Links to other subjects The unit also leads students to consider the nature of political power and responsibility, and issues of racial conflict and stereotyping. It thus offers a stimulus for work on Citizenship (NC objectives 1b, 2b, 2c), looking at situations, such as recent conflicts, invasions and massacres, where there is a need for mutual respect and understanding, particularly in relation to diversity and issues of human rights.</p> <p>The unit particularly requires speaking and listening skills.</p>	<p>Prior knowledge</p> <p>It would be helpful if the students had</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. some understanding of the use of sources and reasons and results together with the significance of historical events; and 2. earlier conquests, e.g. the Roman defeat of Boudicca, the Norman treatment of the Saxons during the harrying of the North, or the Norman intervention in Ireland.
<p>National Curriculum Historical objectives - Key Stage 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past <ol style="list-style-type: none"> c. identify and describe reasons for, and results of, historical events, situations, and changes in the periods studied d. describe and make links between the main events, situations and changes within and across different periods and societies e. consider the significance of the main events, people and changes studied 4. Historical enquiry <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. ask and answer questions, and to select and record information, relevant to the focus of the enquiry 5. Organisation and communication <ol style="list-style-type: none"> c. communicate their knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways. 	

Lesson plans & activities

Lesson	Key question	Starter	Activities	NC (History)
1	What happened at Mullaghmast in 1578?	Think, pair and share. Look at three woodcuts at the bottom of the worksheet and describe what is happening in each one. What questions would you ask to find out more?	Scenario Baby whiteboard with written sources in centre with visuals on laminated card. 1. Underline in colour A any information in each of the blue sources that helps you understand what happened. 2. Underline in colour B any words which suggest that these events were shocking. 3. In what way, if at all, do these sources help to explain the woodcuts. 4. Write a short report, 20-30 words, of what happened. 5. In pairs, look at both accounts again and decide on the similarities and differences between them. 5. What more would you like to know about this massacre? Formulate some questions, to which you would like answers.	4b*, 5c
2 & 3	Why did the massacre of Mullaghmast take place?	Students sit in pairs, back to back, and one describes to the other the visual sources A or C. <i>Or</i> Working in pairs students give labels to the visual sources, A and C.	Divide the class into groups. 1. Look again at source C - the Irish king dining outdoors. A woodcut, it is one of the few visual sources we have of Ireland in the 16th century. What can you learn from the picture? Does it give you any clue about the engraver's opinion of the Irish? 2. Spot the red herring in the list of possible causes (Table 1). 3. Match the statements and the selected sources (Table 2). 4. Identify the long-term and short-term causes of the massacre. 5. Discuss each cause in turn and then select what you think are the five most important causes - including only one short-term cause - of the massacre and say why you think they are the most important. 6. Plenary - bonfire diagram. Each group explains what is the 'big' cause for them and this is written into the bonfire diagram on the board along with the short-term cause or spark that ignites the event. 7. Linking the causes with a mindmap by putting your 'big' cause in the middle of a sheet of paper and arranging the other four 'big' causes around the central cause, explaining how they are linked. You may add other causes if you think they help to explain the massacre.	2c*, 2d, 4b, 5c
4	Was their Irish policy worthwhile for the Tudors?	Students individually look at the timeline from the last lesson and suggest the most important date regarding the Tudors dealing with Ireland. Then they share and compare with neighbour.	Scenario Two talking heads with speech bubbles. A hard line Tudor official and a softer line Tudor official. 1. As a class, using work from the previous lesson, establish some criteria by which to judge whether their Irish policy was worthwhile for the Tudors. [^] 2. Divide class into six groups, three for each head. Each group (a) looks at sources below in order to support their case and to rebut arguments against; (b) selects four to six sources that are most useful in supporting each of the two views; and (c) fills in four to six speech bubbles. <i>(Alternative: Divide the class into two, splitting one half into two groups, each presenting the talking different heads. The other half of the class forms a court of enquiry about whether or not Tudor policy was a success and formulates questions to ask the three groups. At the end, the enquiry group makes a judgement on the policy.)</i>	2c, 2e, 4b*, 5c
[^] Three subsets of questions could be considered: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why did the Tudors want to control Ireland? What policies or options were available to them? What were the advantages and disadvantages of different policies or options? Why did they choose some options and not others? How far did Tudors establish control over Ireland? How far did their policies strengthen or endanger national security? How far was the Protestant religion established in Ireland? How successful were the plantations? How far were individual ambitions for land, power and money satisfied? How economical and efficient were those policies and how far did the cost place a strain on Tudor resources? How did the Irish people regard Tudor policies? How willingly did they submit? How far were fear and force the main considerations? How far did Tudor policies result in a contented and united population or create trouble for the future? 				

Tudor conquest of Ireland

Based on *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* edited by Connolly, S.J., OUP, 1998, 0-19866-240-8, 553-4

Ireland was up for grabs in the sixteenth century. In 1500 the power of the English Crown was limited to a small area in and around Dublin, called the Pale. Elsewhere traditional Irish rulers, governed by Gaelic law and customs, or the Old English, descendants of the Norman settlers, held sway. By the end of the century, the power of the English monarch ran throughout the country. This Tudor conquest, the extension of English lordship to full English sovereignty throughout Ireland, was the result of a reform policy which invariably ended being applied by force. The process, which got under way in 1534 and lasted until 1603, involved conflicts of increasing scale: the Kildare rebellion, the war of the Geraldine League, the revolt of Shane O'Neill, the Desmond and Baltinglass revolts, and the Nine Years War.

Objectives

An important reason for the Tudor conquest was the existence of a frontier and the related problems of defence and grand strategy. The original objective in 1534 was merely the reform of the Pale under the closer direction of Whitehall. This departure coincided with England's break with Rome, which left her diplomatically isolated and strategically vulnerable. An English lord deputy with a standing army and little local support was always apt to take the military option. Such actions in Ireland created strategic threats where none had hitherto existed. The military activities of Lord Deputy Grey in the 1530s resulted in the establishment of the Geraldine League with its appeals to the Scottish king. The creation of the kingdom of Ireland (1541) necessarily entailed consideration of administrative centralization across the whole island. When the related integrative policy of surrender and regrant faltered, the placement of garrisons in Leix and Offaly caused the O'Mores and O'Connors to appeal to France. The line of the Pale was breached, the frontier was now moving, and the process continuous.

New English colonialism

The crown became anxious to assert control for fear that foreign powers would exploit the situation. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the New English, as captains, constables, seneschals, and provincial presidents, deliberately provoked conflicts so as to reap rewards in the lands and offices which subsequently became available. The commissions of martial law to local commanders introduced by Sussex in 1556 escalated the level of violence involved. A new English colonialism justified by old chauvinist ideas and new religious prejudices was generated, with land-hungry younger sons acquiring confiscated Irish estates as a means of providing an income and gentry status.

The role of lords deputy as architects of the conquest is a subject of debate. The most aggressive policies belong to Sussex, Sidney, Grey, and Perrot, but ironically those of the corrupt, reactive, and underfinanced Fitzwilliam caused the most bother. Canny asserts that Sidney produced a blueprint of plantations and provincial presidencies for the establishment of Tudor rule. Brady insists that the government's intention was always the establishment of the common law by reform not conquest, and concentrates on Sidney's alternative policy of composition. Crawford emphasizes the role of the privy council. This executive body had an obvious interest in making English sovereignty effective. At local level the object was shire government with sheriffs, justices of the peace, jailhouses, and visiting assizes. Most of Ireland was shired on paper by the mid-1580s, but it was physical control of the country after 1603 that enabled the system to operate.

Military matters

Military matters bulk large in any account of the Tudor conquest. The army grew to a peak of 16,000 during the Nine Years War. Expeditions into the interior against errant Gaelic lords were pointless. The only effective strategy was the establishment of garrisons followed by spoliation of the people, their crops, and their livestock, bringing starvation and eventual submission. These tactics were very expensive to maintain and were employed only in the Desmond and Nine Years wars. Massacres took place at Rathlin, Belfast, Mullaghmast, and Smerwick. Hostages were frequently taken to guarantee ceasefires during wartime and to secure compliance during peacetime. Irish revenues never sustained the cost of the standing army, which had always to be subsidized from England. The Irish lords also increased and modernized their forces. They employed large numbers of redshanks (light infantry usually hired for the summer months from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland during the summer) and then utilized the supply system these developed to increase local infantry recruits. Firearms aided Irish guerrilla tactics, and assisted in victories such as Glenmalure and the Yellow Ford, but the infrastructure needed for siege warfare was lacking.

Success or failure?

Tudor policy did undermine and destroy the Gaelic political system, curbed the power of the Old English and asserted the power of the Crown throughout Ireland. No longer was the authority of the English monarch confined to the Pale as it had been at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

However, the way in which this was done stored up future trouble. Irish nationalism and Irish alienation from English rule were chiefly a consequence, rather than a cause, of the Tudor conquest. Moreover, the new kingdom of Ireland, controlled from London but without a substantial input into the political process there, proved a serious and continuing source of instability in the developing British state. It left a series of unresolved tensions between King James's three kingdoms which later came back to haunt the Stuart monarchy, precipitating its collapse and the creation of a republic (1638-51).